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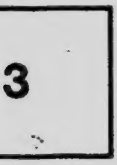

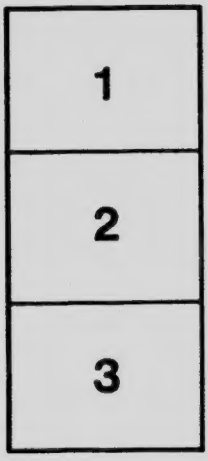

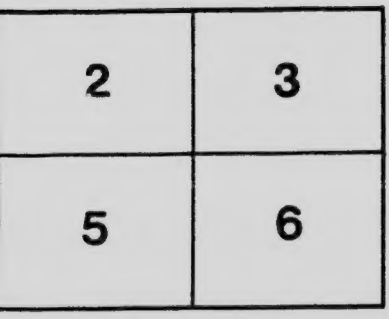

DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

LIVE STOCK BRANCH.

H. S. ARKELL, Commissioner.

SHEEP AND GOAT DIVISION.

THE MANAGEMENT OF SMALL FLOCKS SERIES.

PAMPHLET No 16

March, 1919.

VALUE OF CASTRATION AND DOCKING

BY

NORMAN STANSFIELD AND ARTHUR MORTON.

It is useless to advocate a practice which does not show returns in dollars and cents. Money returns appeal to all who regard their operations as a source of revenue and a means of a livelihood. If after looking into such returns the practice is not followed then nothing further can be said on the subject. In order to obtain the fullest returns it is necessary to sell the finished product for the highest market price. A slight premium is always paid for a first-class article when it is sold. These premiums are the returns which change an investment from a mediocre one to a good one.

These photographs represent carload lots of lambs of approximately the same age which were sold on a Canadian stockyard and the final photographs show the difference in the carcase. The buyer values the live animals from the dressed carcase standpoint.

WHY CASTRATING PAYS.

1. Castrated lambs are not as restless as ram lambs and attend to their business better which is getting fat and ready for the block.

2. Wethers are easier to fence and herd on the farm.

3. Wethers do not annoy the ewe and ewe lambs in the flock. The wether lambs can be left in the ewe flock without danger. Ram lambs must be separated or breeding will take place.

4. On the same feed and under the same conditions wethers will grow bigger and fatter than ram lambs.

5. If the market in the Fall drops and becomes dead, the wethers may be carried over but the ram lambs must be sold at any price.

6. Finally and most important, wethers sell at a premium above ram lambs on the market.

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Fig. 1.—Showing carload of docked and castrated lambs which were rated as No. 1 and brought the highest price, $16.50 per hundred. These lambs averaged 93 pounds per head. Average value per lamb $15.34.

Fig. 2.—Represents carload of undocked and uncastrated lambs which were rated as Common and brought $14.00 per hundred. Note the nondescript breeding, lack of uniformity and the signs of general neglect. The average weight was 68 pounds per head. Average value per lamb $9.52.

Fig. 3.—Average lamb of No. 1, carload.

Fig. 4.—Average lamb in carload lot rated as Common showing every evidence of neglect.

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Fig. 5.—Cross section of the carcase of an average lamb in carload rated as No. 1. This meat is well finished without excessive fat and the lean marbled in an attractive manner. A roast from this carcase would be appetising and would satisfy the most fastidious.

Fig. 6.—Cross section of carcase of the average lamb in common carload. The lack of finish is obvious. After cooking there would be no fat left.

WHY DOCKING PAYS.

1. The tail is useless and a detriment.

2. Manure gathers on a long tail, but . docked this cannot occur. Maggots often appear on the rumps of lambs and sheep where manure is caked. These pests cause considerable loss and stop growth. In the case of small lambs, often the manure cakes so hard that it is impossible for the bowels to act and death follows.

3. Docking is a sign of careful management. It makes the animal more attractive and, therefore, easier to sell. A buyer will not purchase the neglected flock until he has purchased all the good quality lambs.

4. All ewe lambs should be docked because it makes breeding easier and does not waste the strength of the ram. A long tail obstructs and impedes during the breeding season.

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